new masses

Justice Takes a Holiday

by VIRGINIA GARDNER

Marx Against Myth

by DIRK J. STRUIK

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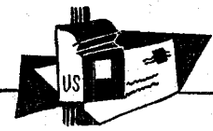

Dunham Shows How

To New Masses: Because I am one of many who are excited about what *Man Against Myth*, by Barrows Dunham, has to offer progressive and Communist readers, I was especially interested in Dr. Selsam's review of it [*NM*, May 27]. Although in the main I do not take exception to what he says, I find that the tone of his praise produces the impression that it is a book one can take or leave. (Maybe one can, but I think one shouldn't.) Others of my friends and acquaintances would, I'm afraid, agree with him. That may be why they returned it to the Book Find Club unread, stating that after looking over the chapter titles they discovered they were already familiar with the material.

I think they were mistaken to do so, and I think Dr. Selsam might have stimulated greater interest among progressive and Communist readers had he put across the fact that Dunham is a wooer as well as a challenger. Specifically, Dunham does a good deal more than a debunking job, and he's winning friends and influencing people in the right direction not just because he knows many of the right answers. He helps improve one's own technique for doing same.

Words like "witty, penetrating and satirical" have lost much of their positive meaning today, particularly as they occur in book reviews. And expressions like "zeal for turning phrases and playing upon words" suggest a talent for cleverness rather than sincere ability for down-to-earth communication, a pretty wonderful quality which distinguishes Dunham's book. He does not slip up on the reader, but actively exercises his talent for putting his subject matter within reach. By the use of living language, contemporary or familiar image, and by direct approach, he helps expel the feeling of frustration so often accompanying the reader who is trying to learn how to apply a new and intricate theory to some of the many daily problems posed by capitalism.

By his modesty, remarkable clarity, and avoidance of cliches, he not only engages his reader's close attention but succeeds in stirring him. (My copy of the book is practically worn out from passing hands two months after publication.)

It would have helped the less well-informed reader had Dr. Selsam indicated why he finds Dunham's "putting together of Spinoza, Hume, Marx and Whitehead . . . bewildering," and why he finds Dunham's "statement of his philosophic indebtedness . . . too eclectic and personal to be meaningful." Offhand, the passage in Dunham's preface to which Dr. Selsam refers seems understandable and unsurprising. Also it would have helped had Dr. Selsam given clearer leads as to why he took issue with Dunham's ethical theory and conception of philosophy.

I cannot argue these points because they are outside my present knowledge. But I can argue why it seems to me urgently necessary for us to take a book that talks as straight as Dunham's, not leave it because of what it fails to offer, or because, at first glance, it seems to repeat something we know. For a long time now we've been talking about how better to integrate our political understanding with the grass roots from which we came. Barrows Dunham's first book is one which helps show how.

M. A. R.

New York.

Information on Debs

To New Masses: I am now revising my biography of Eugene V. Debs, which received a major award in Essay in the 1947 Hopwood Contest in Creative Writing, and would greatly appreciate any information about persons or libraries who might possess pertinent data, whether diaries, letters, printed material or reminiscences. I will be touring the East in the autumn, and would like to interview any persons who knew Debs. My address is 604 Madison Court, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Raymond S. Ginger.

Ann Arbor.

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Justice Takes a Holiday Virginia Gardner . . . 4
Portside Patter Bill Richards 6
The Big IF: an editorial John Stuart 7
Armaments: Race or Reduction? Frederick Winter 8
You Can Lead a Horse . . . The Editors . . . 11
Man Over Myth Dirk J. Struik 12
Variation on a Theme Yuri Suhl 15
Book Reviews: The Soviet Impact on the Western World, by Edward Hallett Carr: Norman Eberhardt; Masters of the Dew, by Jacques Roumain: Thomas McGrath; Labor Fact Book 8, by Labor Research Association: Albert Prago; The March of Freedom, by William H. Hale: Herbert Aptheker; This is The Year, by Feike Feikema: Ralph Knight 17
The Gag Line Isidor Schneider 22
Records S. Finkelstein 23

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In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume with another the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.—

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, ~~that~~

EXCEPT—REDS, NEGROES, JEWS, LIBERALS, FOREIGN-BORN, TRADE UNIONISTS, ARTISTS, NEW DEALERS, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYES, WOMEN

GROPER-

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JUSTICE TAKES A HOLIDAY

Thomas missed some cues, the jury had balked, but the Dennis trial farce ended according to script.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

IN FRONT of the District Court Building in Washington stands one of the earliest statues made of Abraham Lincoln — and nearby is a dreary little "ornamental" pool, its waters filthy, where little Negro children wade these summer days. It is symbolic of the Jim-Crow system characterizing all of Washington life, for the parks and swimming pools of Washington are not for all. Unless your skin is white you are confined to playgrounds and pools (a total of two) for colored only.

But Negroes do serve on juries in the District. Not that there were any on the jury which found three Negro youths guilty of first-degree murder recently, so that they will die in the electric chair as mandatory here in such convictions—one of them eighteen and one nineteen years old. But they do serve, and it happens that there were six Negroes on the jury which convicted Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the Communist Party, of contempt of Congress—and the reason the jury was out five hours and forty-five minutes, not counting thirty-five minutes for lunch, was because two Negroes courageously held out for acquittal.

A member of the jury told me about it. "We took about a dozen ballots," he said. "The first ballot was six to four for conviction (two not voting). The second ballot, it was ten to two. It stayed that way all afternoon. The two were Negroes—one of them was the shabbiest dressed on the jury, with holes in the seat of his trousers."

Half the members of the jury were government workers. The defense had moved to request that all be challenged for cause, or ruled out by the court as jurors, on the grounds that the President's Loyalty Order created an atmosphere of intimidation in which none could give an impartial verdict. The motion was overruled by Justice David A. Pine.

For more than an hour after the court called in the jury for the so-called Allen charge — a method of whipping the minority in line which has been approved by the Supreme Court and is frequently used—the jury still held out. This is a charge by the judge urging that if nine persons on the jury have reached agreement, whether for conviction or acquittal, the other three conscientiously try to arrive at a unanimous verdict. It was five minutes before six o'clock, and defense counsel's hopes were rising when a report was circulated—unverified, it is true — that the court had asked that the jury be summoned at six o'clock. But at five minutes before the hour, a rap was heard on the jury room door. A verdict had been reached.

"If it hadn't been for the Allen charge," a court attache told me freely later, "that would have been a hung jury."

Dennis, on trial for "willful default" because instead of answering a subpoena issued by the Un-American Committee to appear April 9 he sent a letter explaining why he would not appear, stood erect to hear the verdict read. He remained standing, calm, his face more expressionless than the jurors', as the jury was polled. One man had to be asked to repeat what he said, so faint was his "Guilty" as he apparently dragged it forth.

Because Assistant US Attorney John W. Filhelly asked for increased bail and it could not be arranged until later in the evening, Dennis was handcuffed to a bailiff and escorted out. He remained nonchalant during this process. Immediately after the jury had filed out he had warmly shaken the hands of his attorneys, smiled the smile which had so frequently broken through while Chairman J. Parnell Thomas was on the witness stand and even while Fihelly was summing up for the jury.

MR. FIHELLY, whose Boston accent and Georgetown University background do not alter his resemblance to a police sergeant, particularly where his neck bulges over his collar in the back, told the jury in quavering tones that this was the case of "the United States of America versus Eugene Dennis" and "one of the most important cases" in history. Almost with a sob he reminded that the court had opened with the words, "God save the Court of the United States." With reverence, even tenderness oozing from his voice, he read over the names of the members of the Un-American Committee and reminded them that Eugene Dennis had defied that committee. "God help the day when he or anyone else can get away with that—if I may use the language of the street," he said pompously.

Only once did Louis F. McCabe of Philadelphia, retained by the Civil Rights Congress to defend Dennis, interrupt him. Apparently confusing the defendant with the witness, Rep. Vito Marcantonio (ALP, N. Y.), Mr. Filhelly devoted much of his summation to an attack on Marcantonio. Only when he said "I'm sure Marcantonio shall get a fusillade of Communist votes" did Mr. McCabe object, and the court sustained the objection, reminding Mr. Fihelly the Communist Party was not on trial. At one point, his voice shaking, Mr. Fihelly spoke aghast of "Marcantonio, properly dressed for the occasion with his red tie," who "shook hands with the defendant," and a reporter at the press table gingerly fingered his red tie and smiled covertly.

So skillful had been Mr. McCabe's questioning of Rep. Marcantonio that through his testimony the defense got

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in the record what the judge had denied in questions put to Chairman Thomas — that the Un-American Committee had blasted the Southern Conference for Human Welfare on the eve of Henry Wallace's recent speech here under Conference sponsorship.

"Marcantonio said they were going to send their men to spy," spluttered the prosecutor ineptly. "If that was spying, I don't know what it is—just to be there through representatives to see what happens."

And while regretting that "they brought in the race issue," Mr. Fihelly was forced to admit that "if either Rankin or Bilbo has done what they are alleged to have done they should not be sitting in Congress," but added primly that that was solely for Congress to decide.

Mr. McCabe, whose family in this country dates to pre-Revolutionary days and whose ancestry contains some Irish patriots, is a prematurely graying, ordinary-sized man who addressed the jury in an ordinary tone of voice. He mentioned that often counsel finds hat his opponent has made a speech for him and that he needs to add little. Yes, he said—when the court was opened with the plea that God save the United States and the court, it meant that the court should be protected against encroachments on civil rights. "Thank God for a court where a trial can be had, a trial by jury, a jury of a man's peers—and this is not a right given on a silver platter, but a right which had to be fought for." Except for certain sections of the country, it prevailed, he said, "and it is a right which was not given to the million persons whose names are in the files of the Un-American Committee."

"Mr. Fihelly said I'd tell you a trap was laid to get Dennis down here," he said quietly. "Yes, he knew it was a trap. He hollered about a trap, like he hollered about Marcantonio. If the committee was prepared to hear him for two hours on March 26," he said, alluding to the date on which Dennis was "served" with a subpoena, "why did they know in advance they'd want him on April 9?"

The judge had ruled that the jury was not to consider what happened on March 26, but only whether Dennis was lawfully summoned, and if he deliberately defaulted on April 9. The definition of "willful" was narrowed down to mean "intentional" and "deliberate," or, not accidental; not, as the defense contended it should be, with an evil purpose. This was the moot point of law involved, and after the ruling, McCabe was overheard to say to Fihelly during a recess, "It doesn't leave the jury much to consider." Yet with this little to consider the jury narrowly escaped being a hung jury.

THE prosecutor appeared to be a giant edition of natty little Chairman Thomas — the same apoplectic type, the same dark red swollen face. Thomas sat forward eagerly when asked by the prosecutor if he could identify the defendant. Yes, sir, and there he was—and he flung out an arm dramatically and pointed. He even tilted his head and narrowed his eyes. I can report, however, that Mr. Dennis failed to flinch, shudder or hide his head.

But Rep. Thomas' theatrical opening, which he might have studied up for on his recent trip to Hollywood, was followed by some moments under cross-examination when he apparently missed his cues. Defense Attorney McCabe, in his soft agreeable voice, started by establishing that Thomas was the witness' mother's name, that his father's was John Parnell Feeney. Then he quickly went into other matters. Rep. Thomas said cozily yes, the committee made available to government agencies its files of "hundreds of thousands" of names of persons who have been considered members or sponsors of un-American organizations and their fronts.

"Are they made available to private industry?" Attorney McCabe asked, just as pleasantly.

Rep. Thomas hesitated. Slowly, and eyeing the defense attorney as if he couldn't quite trust him, he replied, after some hesitation, "I don't believe so."

"Has any legislation been proposed as a result of your activities?" Mr. McCabe asked cheerfully. The defense in its opening argument had contended among other things that this was not a true legislative committee.

Rep. Thomas replied frankly, "I don't believe so." At once Mr. Fihelly was on his feet objecting, and the court ruled out this answer revealing the committee's lack of legislative activity.

The court would not let the witness answer whether he hadn't said in the 78th Congress that the committee had a million names on file, but he did allow him to say the committee had been augmenting its list.

Judge Pine also sustained objections

It's Your Move Now

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK, ex-Nazi agent, emerged from jail eighteen months ahead of time to find that the world does move, but as far as the American part of it is concerned, in a sense quite different from that of Galileo's famous phrase. When he went to prison some four years ago, it was the American fascists who were being prosecuted by the government; today it is the American anti-fascists.

Viereck was let out just in time to be able to rejoice over: (1) the conviction of Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the Communist Party, on a contempt of Congress charge; (2) the sentencing of Gerhart Eisler, German Communist, to the maximum penalty of one year in jail and $1,000 for contempt of Congress; (3) the conviction of sixteen members of the board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee on the same charge; (4) the sentencing of Carl A. Marzani, former State Department employe, to one to three years in prison on a charge of concealing membership in the Communist Party; (5) the firing of ten unnamed State Department employes for reasons of "security."

The contempt charges are all the result of the efforts of the chief political arm of American Hitlerism, the House Un-American Activities Committee, abetted by the Department of Justice, to smash the constitutional rights of progressive Americans and their organizations. The convictions will be appealed. However, what happens in these cases and what happens to the rights of all Americans will depend on how quickly millions of us move into action to demand the freeing of Dennis and the other victims of Rankinism and the abolition of the unconstitutional Un-American Committee. Letters to your Congressmen and to Attorney General Tom Clark will help emphasize this point.

THE EDITORS.

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to the following questions: Had all the persons charged with being subversive by the committee been given the chance to come before the committee and clear themselves? Had the members of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, "which your committee publicized within the last two weeks," been allowed to come before the committee? When their names were placed on the committee's card index, were the persons so notified?

Rep. Thomas was sitting back looking a little smug after this barrage of questions was ruled out when Mr. McCabe, in his sweetest, most innocuous manner, asked: "And does your committee have any test for what is un-American?"

Fihelly promptly objected, but this objection was overruled by Judge Pine.

"I would say," said Chairman Thomas, making a stab at a judicious manner, "that every member has a good idea of what is un-American."

Mr. McCabe, concealing his delight, continued in a disarming monotone to ask, and Mr. Thomas continued to answer, serenely, the following:

Q. Would you include as un-American an organization which destroys our institution of free speech? A. There is no doubt about it.

Q. Would you include an organization that destroys the privileges granted our citizens under the Bill of Rights? A. (Shaking a finger coyly at defense counsel) Remember, I'm not an attorney, I'm just a plain witness. (After being told to answer the question) I would say it would include any organization which would destroy part of the Bill of Rights.

Q. I believe I asked you whether your committee had before it a judicial pronouncement as to what is un-American or subversive. A. No, we don't have an official pronouncement.

Q. Isn't it true you had announced you would not hear any Communists? A. I heard something like that was in the press, but I don't recall saying that.

Q. As a matter of fact, didn't you invite the defendant there simply for the purpose of harassing him? A. No, we did not.

Q. When Robert Taylor (movie actor) was before you, did you ask him if that was his right name? A. No, we didn't. . . . Mr. Dennis was general secretary of the Communist Party, and as general secretary he follows a certain line (gesturing with arms). (An objection to this was sustained.)

Q. If you really wanted to get the position of the Communist Party on certain bills, what difference did it make if his name was Dennis, or if he had held the name of Dennis longer than you have been known by the name of Thomas? A. . . . Naturally we wanted to know if he used any other names—on a passport or anything. (Here the judge sustained an objection, ruling that nothing must be gone into beyond the inquiry made.)

ALTHOUGH Mr. Fihelly is one of the top prosecutors and he had the District Attorney by his side much of the time, it was not on direct examination of Rep. Marcantonio that the testimony most damaging to the government's case was brought out, but under cross-examination by the ardent Mr. Fihelly. Summoned by Mr. McCabe to testify as to the committee's unconstitutionality, Rep. Marcantonio was not allowed to be questioned on this and arguments were not even permitted in open court outside the jury's presence, but limited to the bench. Nevertheless, he was permitted by the court to explain that only one sentence of an eleven-page letter written to the committee by Dennis was supplied to Congress. And he was allowed to testify that he knew that officials of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare were not called before the committee.

But all of Mr. Fihelly's shouts and blusterings did not intimidate the unintimidable Rep. Marcantonio. Asked if he approved of the principles and teachings of the Communist Party, he said he believed in the capitalist system, but was stopped from answering further by a defense objection, which was sustained.

Then the prosecutor, shouting, his eyes bulging from a contorted face, the bulge on the back of what should have been his neck a violent red, asked: "Aren't you the cham-peen in the halls of Congress of the Communist Party?" This gave Mr. Marcantonio all the chance he wanted. He replied:

"I am the champion in Congress of democratic rights in America. I have been fighting to sustain this Constitution of ours against the invasion of domestic fascism, Ku Klux Klaners, enemies of labor and enemies of democracy."

"And haven't you fought fight after fight for the Communist Party?" Fihelly shouted.

"I have fought," Marcantonio replied, raising his voice so that it was fully as audible, if not as loud, as Filhelly's, "for the constitutional rights of the Communist Party in defense of democracy. Look in the *Congressional Record* and you'll find every word I've said here said in the Congress of the United States."

"The defense rests," said Mr. McCabe quietly.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Scientists claim that the day is not far off when a plane will leave New York at three o'clock and arrive in California two hours earlier. For the present, however, setting back the clock is strictly a Congressional function.

●

Franco has presented Eva Peron with a $4,000 casket of perfume. It's a toss-up as to which one needs it most.

●

Dr. Vannevar Bush, the atomic scientist, says that talk of a quick push-button war is highly exaggerated. Getting killed in any future war will not be as easy as we've been led to believe.

●

One expert predicts that labor will go underground, if necessary, to fight the Taft-Hartley Act. All except the miners, who have their own methods.

●

A request for new Congressional plumbing has been denied by the House Appropriations Committee. After all, too much money for their salaries has already gone down the drain.

●

The WCTU has just held its seventeenth convention. It has gone on record as unalterably opposed to loose women and tight men.

●

The House of Representatives is seeking to put through another Wool Bill, which would raise prices. They're trying to pull the stuff over our eyes and charge more at the same time.

●

Representative Hartley threatens to get "still tougher" with labor. He's got his gang behind him now, but just wait until they get him alone at the polls.

●

Homer Loomis, Jr., the ex-Columbian, Inc., has founded a new organization to be known as the People's Profound Progressive Protest Political Party. They might just as well add another "P"—Pew!

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The Big IF

An Editorial by JOHN STUART

THE Marshall proposal can be successful on the sole condition that the Truman Doctrine be conceded a failure and its substance discarded. Therein, it seems to me, lies the crux of the issue. Nor are there any alternatives to facing it. We cannot in Europe or elsewhere have both a policy of political aggression and a policy of equitable assistance. In the logic of things the latter inevitably becomes, as before, the prop of the other. Those who say that the Truman Doctrine is now quite dead and we should, therefore, proceed to underwrite the new project are making the wish father to the thought. They mean well but as in all wishful thinking the conclusions hardly square with the facts. I need not detail these facts in their entirety—the Hungarian notes, the pressuring of Latin America to accept the American plan for arms standardization, the promiscuous relationship with Peron in Argentina, the purchase of Greek sovereignty—yet they loom large enough to create the deepest suspicion. In short, unless American foreign policy is revamped, its sharp claws cut, unless it is redirected to the road of democratic cooperation and real equality, we can look upon General Marshall's speech at Harvard as a hypocritical gesture motivated by the need to appease the strong dissatisfaction with the conduct of our foreign affairs.

No door, however, should be shut. I believe that this is what impelled the Russians to come to Paris. They were impelled also by their desire to speed European reconstruction, to see to it that a so-called united Europe does not become the screen for a cartelized Europe. They were impelled, in addition, by their need rapidly to rehabilitate their land; but we should know now that these needs cannot be interpreted as signs of weakness, nor can they be traded for reparations nor for the rights of the new democracies.

The Soviet representatives, as others of Eastern Europe, have been engaged in finding out just what the American package will cost. For General Marshall was exceedingly vague both on terms and procedures. There is no doubt that Mr. Bevin knew better than anyone what Marshall did not say in his speech and while Washington has had no representative at the Paris meeting Bevin has served as such especially after his talks with the American Under Secretary of State for economic affairs, Will Clayton. If the Russians were thin-skinned, if they did not earnestly believe cooperation is possible despite fundamentally different economic systems, they might have taken offense at the rude and inhospitable way in which they were invited to attend. They responded quickly and agreed to meet without delay, though they were given the shortest notice—almost an ultimatum in tone—on an issue as critical and complex as European reconstruction. And there is every reason to believe that the Soviets were not wanted, if only because their absence would be used as an additional excuse for welding a Western bloc centered on an Anglo-American-controlled Ruhr.

This is a most important point to bear in mind. Everything Bevin and Marshall have done, particularly at the recent Moscow conference of foreign ministers, was with the purpose of presenting Soviet leadership as undermining and sabotaging European recovery. So persistent were these two in transmitting that falsehood that a good many Americans came to believe it. We know now, much to the regret of those who had hoped for a different turn of events, that not only is it an undiluted myth but the Soviets will not forego opportunities to help put Europe, with the rest of the world, on its feet and give countries the productive capacity to live in independence. Not even official insults such as Attlee and Bevin delivered in speeches made almost simultaneously with the invitation to Molotov, or the one so brazenly made by Washington's deputy representative to the United Nations, Hershell Johnson, could dissuade the Russians from keeping their eye on the ball.

I STRESS this because of the great damage the lies about Russia do us as a people. Soviet-baiting as well as Red-baiting are most costly games. In the name of saving the trade unions from communism our labor movement is hog-tied and placed on a rack threatening the entire substance of American democracy—quite apart from wages and the standard of living. In the name of saving the world from the "menace" of bolshevism, the Wall Street millionaires would cut off many areas of the globe from the help that would keep American factories going and American workers in jobs. We have a critical concern with the restoration of good relations with the Soviet Union if no other reason than that it is good business. The Soviet market is enormous. The markets of other countries in transition to socialism are broadening and eager for our produce. Should the megalomania of American monopolists hold sway who is it that will suffer? Will it really be the USSR, or Poland, or Czechoslovakia? They have already had a full cup of suffering. They may be hampered somewhat for a short time but they have faced worse than going without what rapacious imperialism will attempt to keep from them and they will win, as they are winning already, their battle to live according to what modern science and planning make possible. The suffering will be ours primarily. That may be hard to see now but let the intoxication of postwar boom continue to wear off and we shall see how destructive the Truman Doctrine is in terms of our daily bread.

Whatever the outcome of the Paris meeting, it is the United States that has the biggest task. To believe that our worries come only from abroad is to be victimized by a grandiose hoax. It is here that our house must be put in order, here that we must find ourselves. The problem that faces us is not whether we can help Europe but that it must be helped and quickly in order to help ourselves. It is this truth that confronts us with a great political compulsion: to undo the damage of the past two years, to eliminate the Truman Doctrine, to defeat those who would send aid abroad only as a first step in a process of enslavement. Secretary Marshall has raised an issue that can be justly resolved in only one way—and that is by the American people pressing the government into making decisions which serve the peoples' interests.

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ARMAMENTS: RACE OR REDUCTION?

A report from the UN which focuses on the real issues behind all the conflict and confusion.

By FREDERICK WINTER

THE words which pour unstintingly from Lake Success tend, with the passing of time, to lose their meaning. No matter how clear the original aim or directive, after it is batted about, freely interpreted, affirmed with reservations, probed with dubious surgery, yes can mean no, black can mean white and disarm can mean rearm. This tournament of anagrams often becomes the chief preoccupation of two important working bodies of the United Nations—the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments.

The General Assembly resolution on the subject of world reduction of armaments was clear. Its meaning seemed unquestionable in spirit and in letter: the protection of peace by the early reduction of armaments. But by a strange device of changing a letter here and a letter there, it is now held by many of the delegates, particularly the American and British, to mean that early reduction of armaments is to be avoided as a threat to peace. Gromyko's persistent quoting of the General Assembly resolution has come to be widely regarded as a "plot" to undermine the United Nations.

The position of the Anglo-American bloc is that before any weapon can be discarded, from a tommy-gun to the atomic bomb, a complete system of air-tight, guaranteed security must be put into effect. In the Commission for Conventional Armaments, it is argued that three preconditions are required before the weapons of everyday, old-fashioned war are laid aside: (1) control must be thoroughly established over atomic energy; (2) the international police force must be set up and working; (3) a system of security and guarantees in general must be operative.

The Soviet Union's contention, which the others charge indicates the "inflexibility" of the Russian mind, is that disarmament is a necessary first step to security, that before police enforcement can be undertaken and proved effective, the law must be legislated into existence. The Anglo-Americans assert in reply that they dare not disarm in a world in which there is no mutual confidence among nations—in which position they resemble a curiously child-like burglar who is offended when people lock their doors at night.

To bolster his contention, Gromyko has pointed out: "No statements are contained in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on December 14 which, either directly or indirectly, refer to the necessity of ensuring guarantees as a condition of the taking of measures for the reduction of armaments. On the contrary, in the General Assembly's unanimously adopted resolution, reference is made to the necessity of an early general regulation and reduction of armaments, and to the necessity of an early formulation and implementation of practical measures in that direction, having in view the fact that the implementation of such measures will in itself promote the strengthening of international security and of mutual confidence between countries."

Similarly Gromyko, shifting the scene but not the substance of his argument, has told the Atomic Energy Commission that the first necessary step in controlling atomic energy must logically be the outlawing of the atomic bomb, the only important reason for control at all. Said Gromyko:

"The urgency of prohibiting the atomic weapon is dictated by the very character of that weapon as a weapon of aggression, and is fully in accordance with the interests of all peace-loving peoples who are concerned to ensure that atomic energy should be used only for peaceful ends, and for the good of humanity, for raising the material standard of the peoples, and for the development of culture."

The issue, then, is: shall there be disarmament now or shall the arms race continue concealed by pious hopes, wordy communiques and the beguiling pastime of anagrams?

TO GET down to details and analyze the inches gained and lost in the current skirmishes, it is necessary to understand the workings of these bodies. Until recently the problem of limiting conventional armaments lay in the collective lap of the Big Five, sitting as a subcommission. The position of small nations in this controversy, as indeed in all controversies, was clearly shown in the debate on the group's formation.

After long and fruitless argument in the full commission, tired, cynical Dr. Fernando Lopez of Colombia voiced the small-nation position. Said he: "But, Mr. Chairman, modern armies and armaments have become so large and require such tremendous outlay for their maintenance, that it can be truthfully said that armed might has been concentrated in the hands of five countries, and more particularly of the United States and the United Kingdom in the West, and of Soviet Russia in the East. They have grown so far out of proportion with the armed forces, the economic means and the technical capacity of all other nations that the latter are considered practically unimportant when they are not taken into account as part of a regional system.

"The position of the militarily weak nations is, to say the least, paradoxical or even tragic. . . . The general regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces is, for many of them, so to express it, a foreign question: one that does not impose upon them sacrifices or efforts of any kind. In Colombia we really have no armaments or armed forces to reduce."

In the end Dr. Lopez' suggestion was adopted that the Big Five retire into a "subcommission" and iron the matter out, but not without some gestures by Washington's representative in favor of its favorite fantasy: that Costa Rica, for example, is as mighty and as independent a factor as Britain, Russia or the United States herself.

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It is a myth which persists not for its charm alone, but because in it lies the principal basis for whittling down the principle of Big Five unanimity. It is thus that the portly American delegate, Warren Austin, and the legally-minded Col. William Hodgson of Australia make references to the "rights of small nations." Actually the game is old and it fools no one, least of all the small nations.

So it was that the Big Five met regularly for two months behind closed doors to talk about disarmament. In the end they came back to the full commission with a confession of failure. Instead of one, they produced two alternative plans of work. One is Russian, the other American.

The Soviet proposal would have the commission proceed methodically to limit the various types of armament, war production and armed forces, and then set up implementing controls. Finally a convention would be drawn for submission to all states concerned.

The American proposal involves first the consideration of control and safeguards. After such a system is established to everybody's satisfaction, the conference could then determine what the system is to control.

Any plan of work to come from the subcommission must aspire, in language at least, to the eventual task of disarmament. But in the battle of words every syllable is significant. In that light the order of procedure proposed by the US is important because it may mean an indefinite delay before any decision on the limitation of arms can be made.

UNTIL recently the debate on atomic control was carried on in closed session. Headline myths flourished. One of these was to the effect that the Anglo-Americans were pleading manfully for strict control of the atom, which the Soviets were resisting. Gromyko tried to dispel that myth in a nationwide radio broadcast, but it lingered in the pat summations of the situation by columnists, and remained an assumption in the public eye. Then he by-passed the dopesters by calling for a full and open session of the Atomic Energy Commission so that he might submit his nation's specific proposals on control.

Though control had been widely demanded ever since Hiroshima, no one had clearly defined it. Gromyko did that. He specified the many jobs of a control commission, its rights as well as its duties, its objectives and the facilities to be granted it. It was control, strict and effective.

No one could any longer maintain that the Soviet Union opposed strict control of atomic energy. Instead, the press here reported Gromyko's position as a retreat. It has become obvious, too, that the United States bloc stands not for control at all but for the complete management and operation of all atomic processes by a commission which would not work according to the rules of unanimity. The US has gone even beyond its teammates and proposed outright ownership of all mined atomic ores. Concerning this proposal, gaunt, somber Frederick Osborne, US atomic expert, said, "The nations will have to swallow hard, but they will have to swallow only once."

The Soviet Union has declined to swallow at all. To do so would be to place its future in the hands of a "majority" controlled by American imperialism. The Russian position remains in favor of strict control and inspection by a commission working under Security Council unanimity rules. The Soviets would also outlaw the atomic bomb as a necessary first step. Washington would postpone that to the last, and continue to stockpile meanwhile.

Unless these major questions are decided, the wavering of the skirmish line is meaningless. For example, the Soviets in closed session secured unanimous approval for one of their amendments to the Commission's report. Since Gromyko proposed no more than to bring the report in line with a General Assembly resolution, unanimity might almost be taken for granted. Yet the debate was bitter, and the assenting votes were so hedged with reservations as to make them meaningless. In the end Sir Charles Darwin of Britain, the evolutionist's grandson, had this to say: "If I were an American, I would be tempted to write at the end of the resolution, 'So what?'"

Into this high-blown American- and British-made nonsense a new and discordant element has entered. There are some delegations here at Lake Success who do not abide by imperialism's game of anagrams. These delegates come from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. They have shockingly bad manners. The entry of this strange new element is profoundly significant. Stane Krassovec, a delegate of Yugoslavia who speaks with the honesty he showed as editor of a newspaper in his nation's Underground, once vented his indignation on a reporter who paid more attention to the words than to the meaning of one of his speeches. Said the young but greying Yugoslav, unaware that he was indicating a new school of diplomacy: "These are not words. They are facts."

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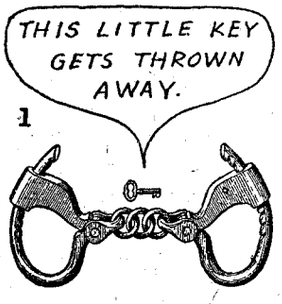
On Safari With Harari:

Key Provisions of Taft-Hartley Law



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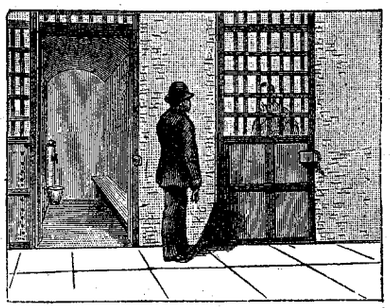

2 Housing For The Union Man

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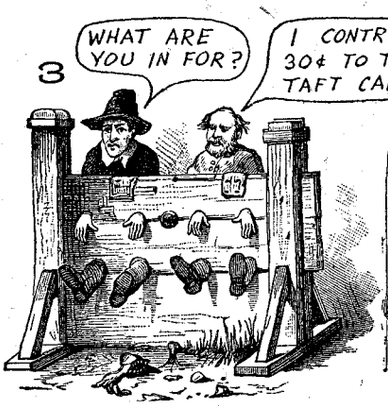
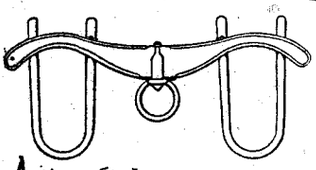
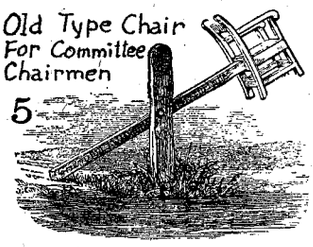




4 New Style Company Union Suit



Old Type Chair For Committee Chairmen

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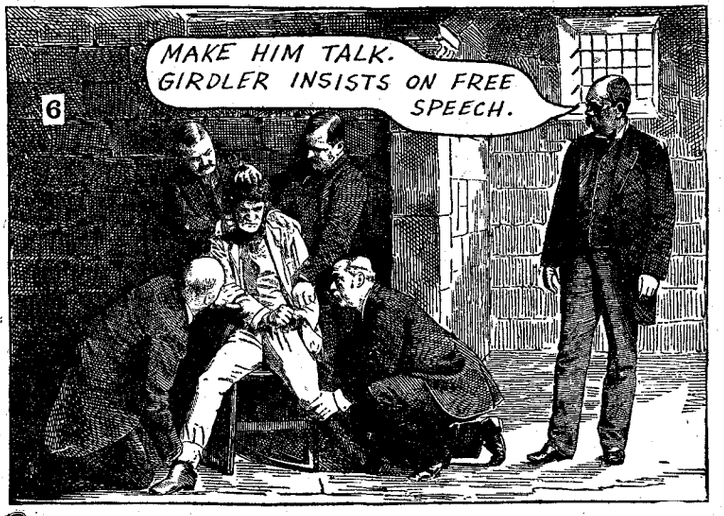

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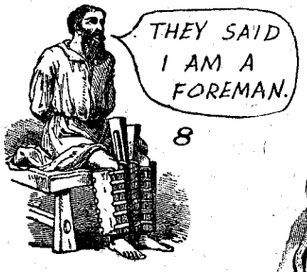

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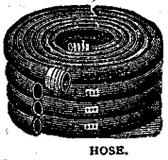

9 Subsidy For Rubber Industry

10 Latest Version Ballot Boxes

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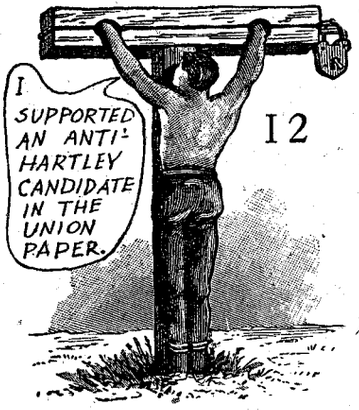

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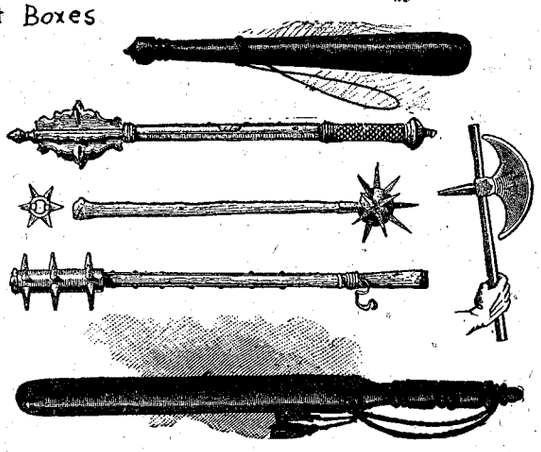
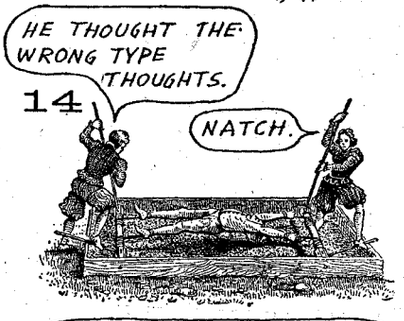


13 Assorted New Type Collective Bargains



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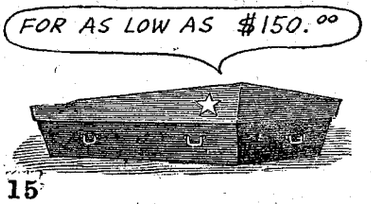

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Harari

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You Can Lead a Horse...

By the Editors

OFTIMES "ithers," as Bobbie Burns shrewdly observed, can see us better than we see ourselves. Many in the nation must feel shame as comments on the Taft-Hartley law pour in through the wire services from all corners of the globe. The world is aghast. British labor voiced its immediate alarm; Louis Saillant, speaking in the name of 71,000,000 in the World Federation of Trade Unions, said from Paris that he hoped all American unions "will reach an understanding in all industries and professions to present the necessary united resistance." The nations of the world that have listened to infinite lectures on democracy from our State Department are worried at the state of democracy in America. Most ironic and perhaps most revealing comment came from Ankara, where the semi-official newspaper *Ulus*, speaking for the dictatorial Turkish regime, demanded that all in their unhappy land consider the American law before criticizing their own new trade union law—which, incidentally, is as close to fascism as Taft is to Hartley.

Many in America, however, do not need the prompting of "ithers," and see reality with painful clarity. The press has been unwillingly replete with stories of labor's swift reactions—the miners' indignant walkout ("Let Taft mine the coal"), the meetings and declarations of top-flight bodies of AFL and CIO, and similar manifestations. Everywhere from grass-roots up we saw a surge toward unified action to negate that measure which, as the New York *Times* reporter from the mine country put it, was known among the diggers by only one name—"the slave law." We read of requests by such prominent labor bodies as Local 600 of the United Automobile Workers and the San Francisco CIO Council for strike demonstrations of protest; AFL's Bill Green spoke of the many letters he had received for similar action. The Federation's staff of legal experts indicated they would advise prompt defiance of certain aspects of the law, namely, the regulation prohibiting political expenditures and the requirement to file affidavits disclaiming association with the Communist Party or its principles. A number of union publications are already deliberately defying the law, putting the finger on the legislators responsible and urging their defeat in 1948.

The Senator from Ohio cannot chortle over the five-point program adopted by the CIO executive board last week which issued a call for a meeting with the AFL and railroad labor to adopt plans for joint action against the new labor law. Significant sections of the AFL appear ready and willing. At rock bottom in the country is the evident burning desire to get going, somehow, immediately, in some vigorous, consistent, concerted manner. And the CIO and AFL leadership can bank upon the most vigorous support for energetic action.

The rank and file will not be satisfied with speech, no matter how indignant or militant the phrase. And to rely on automatic Supreme Court reversal is indeed to lean upon a frail reed. Labor must not forget that the same nine men "who follow the election returns" are also mindful of popular pressure.

Nor was labor alone in registering outrage: significant liberal spokesmen and organizations were urging their associates to band with the trade unions to negate the dreadful possibilities of this measure. From his sick-bed in a New York hospital the former mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia, pleaded with organized labor "to get together." Unless it does, he said, "the workingmen and women of this century will suffer. A united labor front, with a consolidation of progressives, liberals and independents can break the present Republican-Democratic combination."

CONSEQUENTLY the stock in a Third Party has shot up sharply. Liberal spokesmen indicate they are far from satisfied with President Truman and the administration's record on the bill. Typical expression of this can be found in the new column of Dr. Frank Kingdon, in the New York *Post*, which focused attention on bipartisan treachery when he wrote that Truman "gave no signs of using the enormous political powers of his office." Harold L. Ickes, the same day, said: "The Democrats might have made the veto stick if they really had tried. In other words, the administration was playing politics instead of fighting for labor." And, he concluded—rightly, we feel—that "labor is beginning to suspect that it has been tricked by political slickers."

Awareness is growing that behind the bipartisan coalition in Washington stands the ominous figure of monopoly which, as the Progressive Citizens of America said at its Chicago meeting, "lies at the root of America's major economic and political ills today. If not decisively turned back it will end in the triple scourge of impoverishment, fascism, war." As a starter in turning monopoly back, the PCA urged public ownership of coal mines, railroads and electric power. Thus, this liberal organization proposed, "the strangle-hold of concentrated private interests on the economic life of the nation will be relaxed."

For all these reasons, we believe the formation of Third Party machinery today is imperative. Philip Murray's final statement before the Taft-Hartley measure became law was a marker in that direction: so is the undoubted sentiment of millions within labor and among professional and small-business circles. Of course, many bridges are yet to be crossed regarding specific aspects of Third Party strategy for 1948. Whether it means a Third Party presidential ticket in that race remains to be determined: but the immediate formation of Third Party machinery can be a potent factor in helping the progressive Democrats in their maturing struggle against reaction within their own party; it certainly can prove decisive in the choice of many qualified candidates for the next Congress.

These are a few of the considerations millions of thoughtful Americans are pondering today. If they avoid the pitfalls of divisive Red-baiting—which is reaction's ultimate trump card—they can negate the dreams of the gentlemen from Ohio and New Jersey. The opportunity to nullify the Taft-Hartley law is America's opportunity. It needs but to be seized. This requires courage, clarity, unity, permitting no secondary differences to divert us from the main goal.

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MAN OVER MYTH

Marxism and the scientific tradition. How the founders of modern socialism transformed the rationalist outlook into a science.

By DIRK J. STRUIK

MARXISM was born in struggle. 1947-48 marks the 100th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, the document which introduced scientific socialism to mankind.

A specter which has haunted the oppressors of man, Marxism for that reason has been ceaselessly attacked since its inception by the ruling class and its agents. It has been denied and denounced, "refuted" and "revised," from pulpit, press and lectern. In our time it has been exorcised by Franco's firing-squads, burned in the square of Nuremberg—and in the ovens of Maidanek. In our own country it has been harried from high and low, by philosophers and finks, by sages and stooges, by Clare Boothe Luce and Al Capone—and hounded by J. Edgar Hoover and John Rankin.

Embodying man's age-old dream for freedom, it has for that reason become rooted in the minds and loved in the hearts of millions. Its victories are imposing—and increasing; its adherents legion throughout the world; its greatest monument, the socialist society of the USSR, a greater power than ever. From the chaos and wreckage of the capitalist world Marxism emerges ever stronger, invincible.

To celebrate this anniversary NEW MASSES will publish a series of articles by outstanding authorities on the meaning of Marxism in American life, its effects on science, culture and politics. There will also be articles by leading Marxists of other countries. This essay by Dr. Struik, distinguished American scholar and professor of mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the first of this series.

THE EDITORS.

THE *Communist Manifesto* was written at the end of 1847—almost a century ago; it appeared in February of the next year, on the eve of the revolution of 1848. It was a manifesto, a political document, published as the platform of a small and rather obscure group, the Communist League. The temper of the pamphlet was polemical, defiant, passionate. Yet it was at the same time a scientific document, a presentation of a philosophy of history and of society in general. It established social science not only as a means of understanding the social structure, but also as a means of changing and controlling it. It marked the birth of Marxism, which now guides the lives, or helps to guide the lives, of millions of men and women throughout the world.

The fundamental proposition, the core of the *Manifesto*, belongs to Marx. This we know from Engels himself, co-author of the *Manifesto* and lifelong friend of Marx. That proposition is that in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, as well as the resulting social structure, form the basis from which the political and intellectual history of that epoch can be derived. Consequently the whole history of mankind after the disappearance of primitive tribal society has been a history of class struggles, of contests between exploiting and exploited, between ruling and oppressed classes. The history of these class struggles forms an evolutionary series in which nowadays the main oppressed class, the working class, can only emancipate itself from the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, by emancipating the whole of society from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles. The philosophy of the *Manifesto* made it possible not only to explain the past of society, but also to understand the direction in which present society is going. By analyzing the past it helps to guide the future. Socialism was seen as a conscious act of delivery from the contradictions of capitalism, the possibility of full control of society was deduced from the direction in which the primitive controls of present and past society are necessarily developing.

Engels has remarked that this fundamental Marxian proposition is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology. There, out of haphazard actions of living beings—of which Darwin only recognized natural and sexual selection—general patterns of life evolve which, if properly understood, will eventually allow conscious interference by man in shaping living creatures. Engels also pointed out how the fundamental ideas which Marx applied to the study of society have already been successfully applied to natural science, to the theories of gravitation and light, to electricity, inorganic and organic chemistry. The great contribution of the *Communist Manifesto* was its method of viewing *all* human activity, with respect to nature as well as society, in the light of science. From now on not only nature but also the social structure could be understood and its behavior forecast and even controlled. The *Communist Manifesto* sketched for the first time, with inimitable clarity, not only the rationalistic but also the scientific approach to the problems of society.

TWO hundred and ten years before the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* another document had appeared which had sketched, for the first time, the rationalistic approach to nature. In 1637 there was published the *Discourse on Method*, written by the French philosopher and mathema-

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tician Rene Descartes. It is instructive to compare the two revolutionary documents, one of which stands at the beginning of modern natural science and the other at the beginning of modern social science; one of which showed how to control nature, and the other how to control society.

The *Communist Manifesto* makes the impression of a highly emotional appeal, addressing itself to the "proletarians of all countries." The *Discourse* is academic in style, seems to attack nobody in particular, and explains the process by which one man, the author, has tried to establish "the method of rightly conducting the reason, and seeking the truth in the sciences." But a closer inspection reveals the fact that the *Communist Manifesto* seeks also to establish a method of rightly conducting the reason and seeking truth. And Descartes' discourse on reason was in reality a powerful battle cry, addressing itself to a revolutionary class, the emerging bourgeoisie, in an appeal to conquer the world by the use of science and invention. Cartesianism of the seventeenth century, like Marxism of today, was a highly controversial philosophy. Adherence to Cartesian principles brought many a good man in the time of Louis XIV into serious political, religious and personal difficulties.

Descartes rejected established authority and tried to set down rational rules for research. The real criterion for truth, he proclaimed, lies in evidence and reason. And thus he established his rule "never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt." By using such purely rationalistic—we can say materialistic — methods, he saw enormous perspectives ahead:

"I perceived it to be possible to arrive at knowledge highly useful in life; and in place of the speculative philosophy usually taught in the schools, to discover a practical one, by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature." Descartes himself tried to contribute to the execution of his program by research and discoveries in optics, astronomy, medicine and mathematics.

It was a bold scheme, this program of Descartes, not only because research in natural science was only in its beginnings, but also because most people still had to be convinced of the rationality of a method which proclaimed that the only way of obtaining truth in the sciences is through experiment and reason. Medieval belief in authority was all-powerful. Classical, biblical and ecclesiastical statements were considered absolutely binding; to break preconceived notions through the combination of reason and experiment was considered heretical. Catch-all words were used to denounce Cartesianism; it was condemned as "atheistic," just as now Marxism is condemned as "totalitarian." Both Calvinists and Jesuits opposed Cartesianism. Descartes' books were placed on the Index in 1664. Three years later the interment of Descartes' ashes in a Paris church was forbidden. This persecution could not frighten philosophers and scientists; even Catholic priests turned to Cartesianism. In Descartes' steps followed the great thinkers of the later seventeenth century, a Spinoza, a Huygens, a Newton and a Leibniz. In the early eighteenth century Cartesianism even became quite fashionable in France. The triumph of natural science became the triumph of Cartesianism.

Descartes has now won his battle; reason and experiment are universally accepted as the basis for truth in natural science. Much of his specific teachings, on substance, on vortices, on the relation of body and soul, are forgotten. His method remains. There exists at present no reasonable scepticism concerning the truth value of natural science; few people doubt that logical and experimental evidence are able to solve those problems on which there is uncertainty. Not only academic teaching but grammar school education is impregnated with Cartesian thinking. Every teacher of science, whether in Ohio or in Shansi, is in his own way a disciple of Descartes.

WE MIGHT also speak of a Marxian rationalism, since Marxism believes in man's ability to obtain objective information concerning the universe, and rejects supernaturalism. However, it differs from Cartesian rationalism in at least two important respects. In the first place, it extends its domain to the field of social relations. At the very beginning of his exposition Descartes made sure that he kept religion outside of his argumentation. He established a dualism of body and soul, of materialism and idealism. Marx subjects not only religion to his materialistic criticism, but the whole of man's social relations. With Marx all human activity, in nature as well as society, can be subjected to the Cartesian test of truth. Descartes made man and his powers of reasoning and of acting supreme in matters pertaining to substance, to natural science. Marx showed that man can become master of his destiny.

A second point of difference exists. Cartesianism is entirely unhistorical. The very idea that history, or human relations in general, can be subjected to scientific analysis, and that such analysis may show that society is in a state of development—this very idea is alien to Descartes. Marxism, on the contrary, is based on the understanding that society is in constant change, and points to the fundamental cause of this change in class society—namely, the existence of the class struggle. Cartesianism, as compared to Marxism, is static, it knows no evolution; its dynamics is restricted to dynamics in the sense of mechanics, and even this in a primitive way. The emphasis on social change in Marxism is combined with an equally strong emphasis on the interrelation of the sciences and the historical character even of natural science—all elements which are missing in Descartes.

These differences are so vital that it is better not to speak of Marxian rationalism at all, but to use another term and to speak of Marxian dialectics. There is also a dialectical element in Cartesianism—for instance in its relation of algebra to geometry, of numbers to points on a line—but it is rather primitive. We might call it an early seventeenth century form of dialectics. Common to both modes of thought is the materialist rejection of supernaturalism; with Descartes in the domain of natural science, with Marx in the domain of all human thought and activity.

The differences between Descartes and Marx are between a revolutionary thinker living at the beginning of the capitalist period and a revolutionary thinker living at a time when the industrial revolution was well on its way. Descartes, consequently, was an indi-

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vidualist, while Marx was socially conscious. Descartes' *Discourse* opened with a remark on the common sense of man and lets him doubt about the problems of his existence. Then, with the discovery "I think, hence I am," man starts out on his philosophy of certainty. The opening lines of the *Communist Manifesto* are equally characteristic; they introduce man as a social being: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." These examples are typical. The *Meditations* of Descartes open with the author's own desire "to establish a firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences."

Marx's *Capital* starts by introducing a commodity-producing form of society.

Both Descartes' *Discourse* and the *Communist Manifesto* derive their primary importance from their method. Now, more than three hundred years after the publication of Descartes' work, almost all of Descartes' specific contributions to science are antiquated. Several specific proposals contained in the *Communist Manifesto* for immediate political action have also lost their importance for today, though its basic analysis and major predictions have stood the test of time. In both Descartes and Marx the method of thinking has retained its full value, and Marx's, being the modern method, has a far wider appeal. Philosophy, in Marx's words, becomes material power when it directs the action of the masses.

THE most striking thing about the *Communist Manifesto* is its uncanny timeliness; but for some details the pamphlet could have been written today. How many political or sociological documents written a hundred years ago have this same immediate appeal? There are not many scientific papers of the years before 1850 which possess this timeless aspect; the only documents I can think of are some books by the mathematicians Gauss or Laplace. Helmholtz' historic presentation of the principle of conservation of energy was also published in 1847—a worthy companion to the *Communist Manifesto* in the sweeping grandeur of its ideas. Yet the full text of Helmholtz' pamphlet has definitely lost its actuality. Natural science has moved fast in the past century, while social science has moved much slower, despite the enormous increase in specialized information. Marx and Engels are as timely today as they were in 1847.

What are the main contributions to social science laid down in the *Communist Manifesto?* The core of the argumentation is the principle of historical materialism, which we have already given in Engels' formulation. Moreover we find, in few but meaningful words:

1. The statement that every form of society is in a state of evolution, each form passing into another one.

2. An analysis of the origin of the two principal classes of capitalist society, the employers and the workers ("bourgeosie" and "proletarians").

3. A description of the revolutionary role which the employing class has played, and of the way in which the laws of capitalist society itself force workers into organizations of their own choosing.

4. An account of the causes which make the bourgeoisie more and more unable to remain the ruling class.

5. The conclusion that socialism will emerge as the result of the historical evolution of capitalist society itself.

6. A materialistic analysis of the content of different ethical norms and sociological structures existing in present-day society, such as the forms of property, the instability of family life, the content of culture and so-called eternal truths like freedom and justice.

7. A critical description of all previous attempts to change society into socialism.

The *Manifesto* gives an astonishing forecast of some of the most important social phenomena of the past century: the growth of trade unions, the concentration of capital, the political organization of the working class, the conflict between the private ownership of the principal means of production and the public interest, the formation of a socialist society. This is the more remarkable since in 1847 many of these phenomena were hardly, or not at all, in existence. It is easy now to see some weaknesses; the most interesting, perhaps, is its failure to mention the national movements for self-determination. Marx and Engels, in their later work, corrected some of these weaknesses themselves.

THE great struggle of Cartesianism was waged against authority and obscurantism in the field of the natural sciences. This struggle had to be conducted against elements so benighted that we find it hard to believe that they were a reality. The fear of earthquakes and comets as tokens of a wrathful deity is only one example. Another example was the belief in witchcraft. It is instructive to recall that some of the most ardent fighters against this miserable belief came from the school of Descartes, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly through intermediate interpreters. We think, for instance, of the Reverend Balthasar Bekker, who lived from 1634 to 1698 as a minister in the Netherlands, a good patriot and a highly cultured man who tried to convince his fellow citizens to adopt a tolerant attitude to Cartesianism. He met with sharp opposition, which turned into violent hostility when he attacked the ancient fear of comets and the equally ancient belief in witches. His four-volume *Bewitched World* (1693) was a systematic, relentless and ingenious attack on devils and demons; with keen wit he unravelled story after story about ghosts and witches, and "exiled the devil into hell." It was one of the strongest pleas against obscurantism ever written. Bekker's book was received with outcries of horror, especially from the pulpit; he became involved in a long trial, and lost his position as a minister in Amsterdam. However, already during Bekker's lifetime his ideas gained acceptance, and his book was able to save the lives of several wretched persons who otherwise would have perished on the scaffold.

THE struggle against obscurantism in the field of the natural sciences is not yet won, not even in America; but the Cartesian approach is at any rate accepted by most people with a rudiment of education. This is not the case with the acceptance of rationalist ideas in the field of social relations. A new edition of the *Bewitched World* could be written today, and four volumes would hardly be sufficient to deal with the material. From all sides, in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, in schools and from the pulpits, not to speak of the halls of Congress, obscurantism is propagated with the greatest ardor. This, by itself, is not new. Fascism made obscurantist propaganda a fundamental part of its struggle for power. It was the propaganda of the myth, the legend, the lie and the big lie. There exists a book called *No Compromise,* written by Melvin Rader (1941), which gives an analysis

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of this bewildering mass of conscious misinformation. But the destruction of the Axis has not been the end of obscurantist propaganda; its geographical center has only moved to the United States.

The present wave of misinformation has created new demons, devils and witches, who are now collectively labeled "Reds" or "Communists," or "totalitarians." No rational analysis is given of the meaning of these words, which are only used to frighten. The simplest rules of semantics are discarded: authoritarian regimes are called democratic; liberal clergymen are called Communist; conceptions such as "freedom of the press," "religious freedom," "dictatorship" are used without any reference to their actual content. The result is that the average American of these days, if he believes what he reads and hears, must be living in a world of his own so fantastic, so utterly different from reality that Bekker would have no trouble in recognizing a new bewitched world.

An understanding of Marxism and its main ideas becomes under such circumstances extremely difficult. In sharp contrast to the widespread interest which other peoples take in Marxism stands the aloofness of many Americans. It is still a test of the liberalism of a college whether the *Communist Manifesto* can be freely discussed in the classroom. Even liberal instructors identify historical materialism with economic determinism, ignoring the fact that Marxism stresses that man makes his own history. This ignorance of Marxism is fatal, since the theory first expounded in the *Communist Manifesto* is now guiding the destiny of millions of people with whom we have entered into the solemn covenant of the United Nations. How can we understand the Russians if we ignore their philosophy? They understand ours well, too well.

It is sometimes amazing to see how scholars and scientists who would not write a sentence in their professional publications without exact documentation are willing to accept the wildest hearsay evidence about so-called "Communists" and "totalitarians." They may well ponder the case of a contemporary of Balthasar Bekker, also a minister, the Reverend Cotton Mather of Boston. Mather was an admirer of Newton, advocated the Copernican system when it was still heretical to do so, was the first to propose variolous inoculation in America and was a botanist of no mean accomplishment. Yet he believed in demons and witches, and is now mainly remembered because of the disgraceful role he played in the Salem witch trials. His error stemmed from his inability to apply the rationalistic doctrine, which guided him in so many other cases, to the question of witchcraft, despite the fact that in his day the correct position was possible. There are too many Cotton Mathers in our schools and pulpits today. Let them remember, if not the words of Marx, then at least those of Descartes and comprise nothing more in their judgment than has been presented so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.

Variation on a Theme

"That's fine, that's fine," he said, smiling a smile of deep satisfaction. It was obvious that the major was very proud of me.

By YURI SUHL

News Item: By a decree of the Secretary of War, Robert Patterson, issued on April 23, 1947, the Army has abolished its policy of discrimination in its cemeteries. Army officers and enlisted men, white and Negro alike, will now be buried side by side, regardless of rank or race.

I RECALL an experience during my basic training in 1942. It was a bleak and dreary winter day in Georgia. There was no snow on the ground but the air was raw and the cold penetrating. Right after breakfast the Negro and white troops were marched out (by separate paths, of course) to the range for target practice. There, too, the Negro troops were taught separately to shoot down the common enemy.

The outhouses on the range were few and far between and were constructed Southern style—with double accommodations and separate entrances. Over each entrance hung a small sign. On one it said: FOR COLORED PERSONNEL ONLY. On the other it said: FOR WHITE PERSONNEL ONLY. It became part of every soldier's set of conditioned reflexes never to open a door before looking up at the sign above it.

On that particular day something went wrong with the drainage of one of the outhouses, necessitating the hasty construction of another one right near it, a sort of makeshift affair that would have to do in an emergency. In their great haste the six white soldiers who were assigned to this unsavory but urgent detail forgot to draw the color-line in the freshly-dug outhouse. True, it was an open-air arrangement and there were simply no doors over which to hang any signs. But that was no excuse. Not in the Army, and certainly not in the state of Georgia. These soldiers were *white* men and they were supposed to be ingenious enough to rise to any emergency, especially so when it concerned the defense of white supremacy.

This grave error, this serious oversight, could not be concealed very long. For even in the state of Georgia, it seems, a Negro will clamor for relief just as persistently as a white man will. It is known that the frequency of such urges is usually accelerated in cold weather. And it is heartening to know that on this score, too, nature does not practice racial favoritism—even in the state of Georgia.

And this was a very cold day.

The outhouse, to use a military term, was "activated" as soon as it was completed. And then it happened.

A tall, fair-haired lad from Alabama suddenly discovered that he was standing alongside of another soldier of a darker complexion. It is not known

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—From "Les Lettres Francaises."

with certainty whether the white soldier continued with what he was doing or, at the sight of the black soldier, stopped in the middle of what he was doing. But that he lost no time in reporting the incident to his first sergeant there can be no doubt.

The sergeant considered the matter too serious even for a top-kick to handle so he reported it at once to the second lieutenant, who rubbed his chin gravely, commended the sergeant for his alertness and hurried off with the hot news to the CO.

The CO was a captain by military rank and a gentleman by Southern breeding. His face turned several colors in quick succession. His comment was terse: "The damn n——s."

Seconds later the captain was in a jeep on the way to the scene of the incident. The lieutenant was at the wheel, driving fast. When they reached the outhouse they saw it with their own eyes: a Negro soldier and a white soldier standing side by side. The white soldier was one of the captain's own men. He was chatting amiably with his Negro neighbor. As the two officers alighted from the jeep the soldiers finished their business in a hurry, saluted and departed.

The captain circled the outhouse a few times, examining it from all possible angles. Obviously not much could be done with this makeshift affair in the form of thorough segregation. But the color line had to be drawn. He made two suggestions:

1. That a plank be laid across the urinal, separating it in two.

2. That a special guard be placed to direct the white soldiers to one side and the Negro soldiers to the other.

And that's where I came in. I, who had feared that because of my lack of mechanical aptitude I would not make a single important contribution to the war effort, was now given the opportunity to serve my country.

The lieutenant himself came looking for me and, in a tone of extreme urgency, ordered me to fetch my rifle and make it on the double. He took me by jeep to the outhouse and there gave me my instructions.

"Now your job will be to keep them n——s from going this way," he said, indicating with his hand what he meant. "Make'm go all around that way." He made a semi-circle with his arm to illustrate. "You'll be excused from all other duties for the rest of the day. Your job will be to stand guard here and keep your eyes open. Understand?"

"Yessir," I said, and gave him a rifle salute.

As soon as he was gone I began to reflect on the nature of my assignment. I was to direct urinary traffic for the rest of the day. I was to take a half a day out of the war effort to order Negro soldiers—with all the authority that an M1 rifle commands—to stand on *this* side of the plank and not, heaven forbid, on the other side.

"This way, buddy," I would say to the Negro soldiers, "this way."

They would stop and for a split second stare at me in puzzlement. On the way to the place they were in too much of a hurry to fully comprehend the enormity of the insult. But on the way back they would shoot a parting look of contempt in my direction.

Late that afternoon a jeep came clattering across the field and stopped close by the outhouse. A major emerged from the vehicle. I gave him the rifle salute and he returned it in the same bored way that any officer above the rank of second lieutenant would. Apparently he had been informed of the incident and had now come to inspect the place personally. He observed the captain's plan in operation and was satisfied with its effectiveness. He then came up to me and said: "You are making them walk *all* the way around, aren't you?"

"Yessir," I said.

"That's fine, that's fine," he said, smiling a smile of deep satisfaction. He rewarded me with a moment of his presence and a mild look from his stern, military eyes. It was obvious that the major was very proud of me.

Now that the War Department has rewarded the Negro troops with complete racial equality—in its military cemeteries—I am not entirely unreasonable in my hope that if this expansive mood in the WD prevails for any length of time, I may soon get a belated DSC for having served my country above and beyond the call of duty on that bleak afternoon in Georgia.

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review and comment

FREEDOM WITH A PLAN

A perceptive analysis of the Soviet Union's accomplishments and its effect on men's minds.

By NORMAN EBERHARDT

THE SOVIET IMPACT ON THE WESTERN WORLD, *by Edward Hallett Carr. MacMillan. $1.75.*

CLARITY and courage are the parents of truth. These qualities mark the latest book by Edward Hallett Carr, Professor of International Politics at the University College of Wales, an official of the British Foreign Office from 1916 to 1936, one-time Director of Foreign Publicity of the British Ministry of Information and frequent editorialist for *The Times* of London.

Professor Carr dares. His new book is more than a standard for thesis writers. It is that rare phenomenon—the old world looking clear-eyed at the new. The argument that Professor Carr presents in these six brief lectures delivered at Oxford is that Soviet practice and Soviet example, as legitimate and pioneer extensions of democracy's potentialities, advanced beyond and became the chief fertilizing factors in the more welcome developments in the capitalist democracies of the West from Versailles to V-J Day —such as the modern "Common Man" concept in politics, national planning in economics, acknowledgment of full employment as a government goal in the social field, etc. In a historical section, Professor Carr dismisses all "East vs. West" balderdash. Finally, he disposes of the "foreign agent" *cum* witchcraft myth in today's world politics and declares that peace alone, not war, can bring solutions.

"The Bolshevik revolution," Professor Carr winds up, "owed its success not merely to its own power and to the enthusiasm which it generated among its disciples, but to the inner crumbling of the order against which it was directed. The impact of the Soviet Union has fallen on a Western world . . . where the democratic community was in urgent need of reinforcement against the forces of disintegration latent in individualism [meaning "free enterprise"—N.E.] and where the technical conditions of production on the one hand, and the social pressures of mass civilization on the other, were already imposing far-reaching measures of collective organization."

"How then can the Western world best meet this challenge?" Professor Carr asks. In his answer, he contemptuously discards as "shallow" the thought that military power can solve such an issue. Neither does he recommend any administrative magic without popular participation. Instead, he looks for a bridge in the new democratic political forms that have arisen in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. He emphasizes "the attitude of those *peoples* [my italics.—N.E.] who have not made a declared choice between Western democracy and communism and may prefer forms of government intermediate between them," which he believes "will be mainly determined not by ideological sympathies but by the economic achievements and social programs of Western democracy and communism respectively." Here he recognizes without fear "the support which the Soviet Union indirectly derives from those men and women in the Western world who, diagnosing the evils of Western society, believe that some of the ideas inherent in the Bolshevik revolution are relevant to those evils and can be invoked to cure them." That this belief has "some validity," he says, "hardly anyone will any longer care to deny." Finally, Professor Carr warns his readers that "no human institution or order of society ever stands still" and "new forms of social and economic action" are imperative.

Professor Carr is obviously not a Marxist but his perceptive analysis leads him into the camp of progress and peace and is in itself a significant contribution to these aims. Carr's calmly-reasoned book can and should be used as a weapon against the "ideological" warmongers from Burnham to Hoover and against those who have chosen the atom bomb and the prison as their way of meeting the "challenge," the cruel and frightened men from Rankin to Schwellenbach at home to the Truman-Vandenberg-Churchill-Bevin team in foreign policy, and all who would "contain" the choice of the peoples with loans given or denied, with guns pointed or fired, all the way around the globe.

IN VIEW of the bogey-shattering strength of this book, it may be worthwhile to review Professor Carr's opinions on some questions concerning which the press lies so viciously and the hysteria-mongers make their loudest noises.

Can "Western" democrats accept the Soviet Union as a democracy? Professor Carr says yes. He justifies this view not only by noting that the word "democracy" itself was first inserted into the official inter-Allied statements of World War II at the insistence of Stalin, but also by references to history. Present-day Anglo-Saxon democracy is identified with weak central governments and institutional compromises, he says, simply because its early period was marked by such procedures, as in the compromise be-

Happy Birthday!

"I have lived to see the Soviet workers and farmers build socialism in one country. . . . Knowing so well the workers and farmers of America, I know that they, too, will build a socialist country more beautiful than we can even dream of today. . . . I am by no means closing my life story. I expect to live that for years to come." So wrote Ella Reeve Bloor in 1940, in the closing pages of her autobiography, "We Are Many." NM greets this great champion of a better world this July 8 on her eighty-fifth birthday, and wishes her many more years of a full and fruitful life.

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tween monarchic forms and constitutional content. But even in England the compromise became possible only after the revolutionary dictatorship of Cromwell, who decisively smashed the claim of the feudal elements to supremacy. And in France, the revolutionary thinking that changed the history of all Europe never abandoned the idea of a strong government as a vehicle of majority will and a shield against minority reaction.

In today's society, in which labor forms a majority, this idea takes the form of state power in the hands of the working class, operated by workers for the benefit of all who work. Historically it is not an abstract idea of "dictatorship"; it is, rather, the opposite of the centralization of economic and political power in the hands of a small group of reactionaries. History has seen many democratic dictatorships (*i.e.*, of the majority exerting its full rights). Their outstanding characteristic, from Cromwell through Robespierre to the USSR, has been mass participation in administration. Professor Carr shows that capitalism, though born of democratic struggles, retreated fully from this conception of democracy after 1848. At the same time it began to discard the word "democracy" itself, seeing it, in the words of Lord Salisbury, as a state in which "the rich pay all the taxes and the poor make all the laws." The Soviet Union and the new democracies of Europe and Asia do not consider democracy real until democracy's enemies are separated completely from the machine of government, until minority monopolies in property and office are eliminated.

Professor Carr says that the economic idea and example of the USSR can be summarized in the word "planning." The concept of planning does not exclude freedom. On the contrary, it properly means the freedom of the people to run their common resources for their own benefit, instead of having the profit of the few determine when they eat and when they starve, which is slavery indeed. Planning, to be democratic, must have social aims. It "makes nonsense of unemployment," which the USSR has long forgotten.

These ideas are further elaborated in the "Social Impact" section of Professor Carr's study. He points out that while Soviet planning has inspired imitation in capitalist countries, it has also exposed the fact that capitalism and planning are basically contradictory. *Laissez faire* in its pure state "has hardly any adherents left except, perhaps, in certain circles in the United States." But all Western economies are its residuary legatees. This makes full success impossible in projects that "can only be based on comprehensive social philosophy, decided not in individual but in social or collective terms and demanding recognition of social responsibilities as well as rights." A plan, says Professor Carr, must be simultaneously purposeful and popular. People will only subordinate themselves to it and overcome selfish

opposition by the few when they are given justice. "Discrimination between human beings on irrelevant grounds such as sex, race, color or class" must also be eliminated, as in the USSR. Full security must be assured. "The right to work is the socialist answer to the capitalist doctrine of the reserve army of labor." It alone justifies the duty to work.

To show the difference between planning under socialism and nationalization in countries like Britain, which are still capitalist in economy, Professor Carr writes: "There is no sufficient evidence that the attitude of the British transport worker to his job will change because the particular enterprise in which he is employed is nationalized. But it might be radically changed by the realization that governmental power as a whole, including the control of industry, was vested in an authority representing his class and his interests."

These examples of Professor Carr's calm and well-expressed recognition of the facts of the new democracy are matched by many others, which make the book a major aid to understanding. At the same time, the limitations of the work must be pointed out. Marxists believe that the function of scientific thought is not only to explain the world but to guide in changing it. Professor Carr explains many things, but omits the methods of organization and action, by the working class and its party vanguard, which in various forms were essential to the creation of the Soviet and other forms of the new democracy. He does not show how these forms have been established and operated. In many cases his explanations themselves thus become incomplete.

This absence of a class analysis is also responsible for some very questionable formulations in his treatment of Soviet foreign policy. Here he also ends with a recommendation that Britain, while avoiding entanglement with the United States, become the center of a "power galaxy" intermediate between America and the USSR. The question of colonial imperialism, while touched on, is nowhere satisfactorily dealt with. Though he is no follower of Churchill or Bevin, Carr seeks some way of retaining old-fashioned "great power" status for his country. For all his praise of the new democracy he does not see that the future of the British people can be assured only if they themselves become a part of a new democratic Europe and world.

A British critic, writing for Englishmen, would have more to say along these lines. In the American environment, the main and positive features of the book assume more importance, since they nail at the source the lies with which the country is being blanketed today.

In the Wild Grass

MASTERS OF THE DEW, *by Jacques Roumain. Translated by Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $2.50.

JACQUES ROUMAIN is a legend. He is so well known that his name is coupled with those of the great South American writers, and with his contemporaries in Cuba or France or Spain. It is unfortunate that this homage to a fine writer has never, with a couple of exceptions, extended so far as to allow for the translation of his work and its publication in the American press.

By birth Roumain was not cut out for the role which he made for himself. His grandfather was president of the Haitian Republic, and the young Roumain was a member of the very class which it was his dream to over-

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throw. He cut his political teeth in polemics against the American brigands who were plundering his country in the best imperialist mode. Along the way he discovered, in the manner of Karl Liebknecht, that the real enemy is one's own capitalist ruling class and Roumain changed from bourgeois to revolutionary. That he was no arm-chair revolutionist is proven in the periods of exile and the numerous imprisonments with which his country honored him. Somewhere along the way he found time to become an important ethnologist, to write four novels and to produce a body of verse which earned him a vast reputation but which few Americans have had any chance to read. The present novel, his last, was completed shortly before his death in 1944.

Masters of the Dew concerns itself with the life and death of a culture hero. In its own way it is a kind of long celebration of fertility rites, at the same time that it is a realistic story of Haitian peasants.

When Manuel, the hero, returns to his native island after fifteen years in the Cuban sugar-cane fields, he brings a little money and a great deal of social consciousness. The little village which he left as a boy seems, upon his return, to have been "cursed." Not only are the villagers divided by a feud; the land itself is under a fierce drought and the river that watered the fields has dried up. The peasants are left with a little white rum, voodoo rites, and the threat of starvation.

It is the mission of a culture hero to unite and to heal, but in the brawling and divided world of Fonds Rouge this is not easy. His words may sound like the truth, but according to Delira, Manuel's mother, the truth is probably a sin. Manuel breaks the "curse" on the village, ending the long period of sterility, by discovering water in the nearby hills; he and Annaise, who belongs to the opposite faction in the village quarrel, celebrate the event by making love beside the spring. Together they try to bring the vendetta to an end so that the villagers will join in the collective effort needed to dig a canal to the source of the water. Manuel is murdered by one of the factionalists, but his death accomplishes the unity for which he had worked. The peasants begin to lose their senses of sin and of blind necessity and to put in their places Manuel's vision of collective work—the great *coumbite* of the masters of the dew.

This simple story is told with great power and beauty. Roumain is as much concerned with a nature myth translated into social terms as he is with the surface relationships of his characters. As an ethnologist of reputation he could not help being aware of the broader implications of his story, and the death of his hero is accidental, lacking in tragedy, and really unnecessary to the story unless we see in Manuel one of the line of Fraser's scapegoat-kings as well as peasant leader and revolutionary.

Some of the individual passages in the novel are as fine as small poems:

> Into the field of wild grass they went, bare feet in the dew. Pale sky, cool, the chant of guinea hens in the distance. Little by little the shadowy trees, still laden with shreds of darkness, regained their color. An oily light bathed them. A kerchief of sulphur-colored clouds bound the summits of the mountains. The countryside emerged from sleep. In Rosanna's yard the tamarind tree suddenly let fly a noisy swirl of crows like a handful of gravel.

This is Roumain the poet, writing out of the tradition of the French symbolists. Throughout the book such lyricism is balanced by the bitter and hard-earned humor of the peasants whom Roumain knew and loved. These farmers of Haiti, who feel that "if work was a good thing, the rich would have grabbed it up long ago," are the Joads of the Antilles, but they have a singular dignity. *Masters of the Dew* is a good book to own.

THOMAS MCGRATH.

Ammunition

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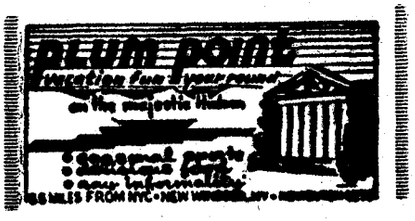

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containing entirely new material, covering approximately the period 1945-46. If you are an active anti-fascist you need this volume, one of whose outstanding features is a special chapter on conditions of the Negro people. The increasing oppression of this ten percent of the population is a major aspect of the drive toward fascism. It is gratifying to see LRA give so prominent a place to this problem.

Other special features include: a separate chapter on political action; a section on the growth of monopoly during the war; important material on the anti-labor, anti-"Red" agencies; and a very important section on farmers and farm workers. The chapters on "Labor and Social Conditions," "Labor Abroad," "Trade Union Developments," "Labor Relations and Strikes" are on the usual high level of accurate reporting we have come to expect from LRA.

It was a little disappointing to note the omission of any reference to the maturing economic crisis. LRA's "Economic Notes" have been consistently reporting the growing manifestations of the coming crisis and they should certainly have been included in Volume 8. The highly valuable data on "the relative position of the worker" is artificially separated from other data in the chapter on "Labor and Social Conditions." This separation may give rise to the erroneous concept that the lot of the working class may be accurately measured only by the real wages of employed workers in relation to their output—a concept which overlooks the unemployed, and overlooks also the many factors which are progressively worsening the conditions of both employed and unemployed workers.

But the wealth of vital factual information in *Labor Fact Book 8* far overshadows the weaknesses. It remains a "must."

ALBERT PRAGO.

Pendulum?

THE MARCH OF FREEDOM, *by William H. Hale. Harper.* $3.

THIS "layman's history of the American people"—to quote the book's subtitle—starts out with high promise: ". . . should we stand apart from the lowly, from the people oppressed for faith, from those who will not be bound—then, in spite of all our riches and our power, we are not what we set out to be." But the promise remains unredeemed and the disappointment, therefore, is all the keener.

At one point the author, speaking for himself, declares: "When one says 'the public,' one usually means 'the middle class.'" Here indeed is a hasty survey of American history as that class might well view it—indecisive, contradictory, shallow and frequently ill-informed. To it, as to the author, the record of American life appears as a "pendulum [swinging] from reform to reaction" and back again, aimless, full of movement, yet motionless.

In terms of haste it was refreshing to find Mr. Hale confessing that while he is certain Henry Adams' nine-volume history of the United States during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison is "sparkling and inexhaustible," he "didn't have the time" to read more than one of them! It is possible that more extended study would have eliminated rather serious failings that must be indicated.

To buttress the exploded idea of Jackson's having "ushered in the spoils system" and thus opened government offices to incompetents the authority cited is—Bertrand Russell! The origins of the Civil War are conceived of mechanically, deterministically (as Hale writes, "I can hardly overstate my own debt to [Louis] Hacker's work") and thus are misinterpreted. In delineating the conduct of that war, the author presents a Confederate government enjoying universal mass support and a Union government whose workers "wanted no part" in the fight, and whose leader was forced, against his will, to emancipate the slaves—all of which is precisely the opposite of the truth.

The account of Reconstruction (depending heavily on George Milton and Claude Bowers, with no mention of Du Bois or Allen) is faulty and superficial. The decisively reactionary character of the Johnsonian Provisional governments is totally missed, and, according to the author, when these were superseded they were replaced by governments which, while at times well-meaning, actually were simply creatures of scheming Northerners who "set up in office" Negro puppets.

The very scanty treatment of labor shows the same tone of apparent indecisiveness and the same devastating "fair-mindedness." The heroic Molly Maguires, whose frame-up and legalized murders are blots as indecent as those of Sacco and Vanzetti, were "Irish roughs . . . who answered the

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mineowners' brutality with more brutality." And the result of the Haymarket affair was to convince "organized labor that Sam Gompers was right"! In today's life and death struggle between finance capital and the working class how is one to take sides? For one sees only "vast combines in steel, motors, finance, utilities" on the one hand and, on the other, "militant labor organizations . . . striking back . . . tying up fuel or component parts or traffic at the expense of the whole country" so that "somewhere in all this the interest of the people at large had been lost."

The discussion of the United States in foreign affairs between the two World Wars is remarkable, perhaps unique, for not once is the crux of the matter—the appearance of the Soviet Union and its repercussions—so much as mentioned. And during the Thirties, during the decade of debauchery —of the rape of China, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia—Mr. Hale can discern no more than a "four-cornered confusion of counsel." This derived from haters of the New Deal, fascists, isolationists and liberals who insisted on reforming America and doing nothing else. To what shall one ascribe the fatal omission of the millions of Americans whose counsel was not confused, who recognized the world-wide threat of fascism and who urged positive action and collective security—to carelessness, ignorance or disingenuousness?

Having said so much it will surprise no one to learn that in this *March of Freedom* the paraders are all white. Mr. Hale can spare but three words for the Negro people — they were "restless" and "hopelessly submerged." Period.

Such is an intelligent and liberal "layman's history of the American people" after a study of the more generally known, accepted and standard history books. What a commentary on those books!

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Man and Farm

THIS IS THE YEAR, *by Feike Feikema. Doubleday.* $3.

PIER FRIXEN is the hardy son of Frisian immigrants who settled challenging Siouxland, out near where Iowa joins with Nebraska, South Dakota and Minnesota. At the opening of this 614-page novel Pier is a young man overflowing with confidence in himself and Mother Earth; at its finish he is broken and old from wrestling with the same lady. Through these approximately twenty years Pier and his neighbors battle against the violence of nature and against crippling mortgages. The hopeless struggle brings his wife, Nertha, to an early, half-crazed old age and death, and gives his son, Teo, a bitter hatred for farming. The struggle also embitters Pier, who walks out of his auctioned house just as the dry earth splits it open, and off the last pages of the book into an uncertain future.

Feikema has sought to depict the lives of his people with rich detail and to give meaning to their fight by showing their growth of understanding. The economic forces which chain his farmers to an unprofitable mill are clearly shown, as is their need and longing for socialism.

The novel develops through a series of episodes. One misses the continuity of story behind them because the sections are not knit together through meaning. One never gets inside the characters; their motivations remain somewhat shadowy, amid the stark recitation of incident. This failure of the author to choose the pertinent and telling among his rich material tends to bog down the reader in a mass of detail; the pace is slowed as a result, and somehow the people and their ideas lose conviction.

One could wish that the same care which Feikema lavished on the details of locale had been given to bringing his people to life in flesh and blood. Certainly the subject is worth it, and perhaps if he had the profound lessons he seeks to draw would have come through.

RALPH KNIGHT.

Books Received

INSIDE JOB!, *by Herb Tank. New Century.* 25¢. The story of Trotskyite intrigue in the labor movement. The liveliest and easiest-to-read account of the history of Trotskyism and the practical work of the Trotskyites yet to appear. Every trade union member should study it.

I SPEAK FOR THADDEUS STEVENS, *by Elsie Singmaster. Houghton Mifflin.* $3.50. A somewhat simplified and sentimentalized version of the life of the great defender of the rights of the Negro people.

DARK DECEMBER, *by Robert E. Merriam. Ziff-Davis.* $3. An account of the Battle of

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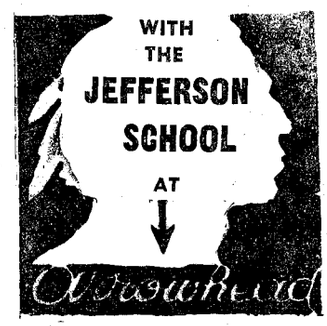

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MASTERWORKS OF SCIENCE, *edited by John Warren Knedler, Jr. Doubleday.* $4. A digest of thirteen classics of science, among them Euclid, Archimedes, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Mendel, Curie and Einstein.

UNTO THE LEAST OF THESE, *by Emma Octavia Lundberg. Appleton Century.* $3.75. A historical survey and critical analysis of public and private social service agencies for children in the United States.

BIG COUNTRY TEXAS, *by Donald Day. Duell, Sloan & Pearce.* $3.50. One more in the growing list of American Folkways books.

THE GAG LINE

THE chief literary means for developing character is dialogue. If one objects that character is best revealed in action I would ask him to consider how much that we think of as action finds expression in speech—the critical decisions, the climactic confessions and so on. Action in the physical sense is seldom presented. This is particularly true in the theater, where the "alarums and excursions" go on in the wings, where the shot, off-stage, renders the suicide or the murder. This has come to be true, more and more, of the movies as well, following the invention of the talking film, which made the "lines" almost as important in the screen script as in the stage play. Despite the film's illimitable freedoms for action in visible space the concentration on dialogue has reduced the film set almost to ordinary stage dimensions.

From this it would seem that dialogue would strive above all to be natural, to be always "in character." But the tendency, almost universal in films and increasingly in plays that direct an over-anxious eye at the box office, is to resort to that murderer of character in dialogue, the gag line.

The gag line pulls attention away from the character to itself, which means, by proxy, to the script writer. Since its sole object is to scintillate it turns everybody into a master of repartee. There is no character differention. Without character to contain it there is little that can last in such writing. The audience has had several hours of distraction, which producers, of course, consider a money's worth. But how many people can remember last month's movies?

In the films, by present Hollywood practice, this is understandable. For the most part the films tell vulgarized fairy tales in which the *personae* are not required to be more than charade characters, expressed sufficiently by costume and a few gestures. And since film leads are all belles and beaus it does not seem amiss to have them also all wits. The gag line, there, is not out of place; it is a congruent unreality in a larger unreality.

In the films, too, the method of working by squads of script writers makes the gag inevitable. These Hollywood writing collectives do not work cooperatively but competitively. Each writer seeks to display more glitter than the next so that more of his lines will be used, since screen credits are allotted according to the number of script pages the writer has in the shooting draft. There is, consequently, not a working with but a working against one's unchosen collaborators. Unified character portrayal under such conditions is impossible. The only unity possible is that which is achieved—the uniform glitter, the gag line that makes all characters one.

When the gag line comes to the theater it is in an analogous way. There is usually the forced collaboration of the "play doctor," whose inevitable medicament is the gag line. The characters, of course, are forgotten. The actors are supposed to mug character in somehow behind the gag line. If rumors of trouble on the road precede a Broadway opening, if the word is heard that the play doctor has been called in, one can anticipate the gag line. In one production I know of, a producer had had courage enough to take on an interesting psychological play but not enough to leave it at that. As his courage oozed he sought to convert the psychological commentary into farce. When the playwright balked at the transfusion of gag lines into the dialogue, the producer had the actors mug the original lines in the hope that that might evoke the safe and sure belly laugh. The play, which might have had a chance if put on for what it was, flopped when

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it was played for what it wasn't.

A laugh is easy to extort. When many people are brought together into a confined space it is not difficult to infect them with compulsive laughter. Such laughter may make a loud sound but it requires no genius to distinguish the spontaneous from the compelled. Even the box office records the difference. Most of the failures of the last season were plays that relied on the gag line.

Sometimes actors are so good, project their defined and flavorous personalities so effectively, that they transcend the lines. They overcome the handicap of bad dialogue somewhat as great European actors playing here overcome the handicaps of an accent or even of a foreign language. But such victories are rare. Poor Luba Malina vainly knocked herself out trying to save *Lovely Me*, and James Mason's roguishly cynical lips uttering the gag lines of *Bathsheba* also failed. The gag line killed them dead.

For the theater is not like the movie. Audience and critical taste and judgment still count, despite the producers' efforts to kill them off. Where the movie magnates with their monopolistic block-booking can impose anything on their audiences, the theater producers must reckon with theirs. Movie audiences have learned to expect little and go quite consciously to kill time. Theater audiences make an occasion of it, bring higher expectations and react vociferously to disappointment, react with the "word of mouth" that can kill a play.

Theater audiences therefore still count, and they have kept the gag line from choking all life out of the stage portrayal of character. And the result is that the movie magnates, seeking something fresh by that safe capitalist method of conquest, money, continue to loom over Broadway with the deadly checkbook. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

RECORDS

THE late Bela Bartok is at last getting phonograph recognition, with the recording of his Third Piano Concerto by rgy Sandor and the Philadelphia Orra under Ormandy (Columbia 674) the Violin Concerto by Yehudi Menuand the Dallas Symphony under Dorati tor 1120). Bartok was a great national t, employing an idiom made up of the odic phrases, the meditative fantasy, the ythmic subtlety and percussive timbres of folk music. He was also a great international artist, in the breadth of his forms, the lucidity of his thought, the sound yet groundbreaking character of his harmonic and contrapuntal science. He chose the most austere of models, Bach, as in the present piano concerto; the late Beethoven, as in his string quartets; the late Brahms, as in the present violin concerto. His music is similarly austere, without the lushness that passes for romantic feeling or the prettiness that passes for neo-classicism. These works take many hearings to appreciate, but they are about as great music as our age has put forth. Both performances are excellent.

Marc Blitzstein's "Airborne" Symphony has been properly recorded by the group that first performed it—the New York City Center Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein, the Shaw Chorus and the fine singers Walter Scheff and Charles Holland (Victor 1117). Blitzstein's powers of musical description and satire are first-rate. His range of positive lyrical expression is narrow, however—this being, I would say, the one great obstacle to his becoming the epic artist he promises to be. What he has most to teach composers is the manner in which every aspect of his form functions powerfully for the audience. This is an exciting experience, a living piece of the war we fought—with its horrors and its youthful laughter, its hatred of fascism, its exultation over victory, its warning for the future, put into clean and honest music.

Kurt Weill, in his excerpts from *Street Scene*, uses not the great folk jazz but its sentimental Broadway derivative, which he makes, however, into a nostalgically moving and often eloquent music. Above all other Broadway composers, he breaks with the standardized ballad forms, he sets the word phrase subtly and effectively — aided by Langston Hughes' poetry—and speaks as touchingly through the orchestra as through the vocal line. While missing the songful strength of our popular music at its best (and that is pretty rare), Weill has written the most integrated and consistently musical score for a Broadway show since *The Cradle Will Rock*. Among the singers, Stoska is outstanding (Columbia 683).

Virgil Thomson's suite from the movie *The Plough that Broke the Plains* is a most tasteful and captivating setting of American folk themes, performed by Stokowski and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra (Victor 1116). It is worth notice that this and the Blitzstein and Weill works, in which the American composer validly approaches the American people, all derive in one way or another from the "proletarian" art of the Thirties and the WPA. What has happened to the Federal Arts Bill?

Gian-Carlo Menotti's ballet "Sebastian," conducted by Mitropoulos, is charming Italianate lyricism with a touch of Prokofieff in the orchestral sound (Columbia X278).

Ravel's *Chansons Madecasses* and *Chants Hebraiques* are little masterpieces of his refined and exotic song art, performed to perfection by Madeline Grey (Vox 186).

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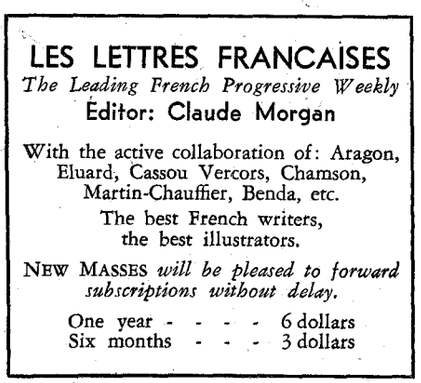
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